

Tolley's 1970 Charger

restoration of a classic muscle car by your average Mopar-obsessed guy

HOW IT'S

Follow the links in the sidebar below to see my Charger in its various stages of existence, either by date or by category.

In the "footer" of each post to the right, you will see a link to a page with only that post. From there you can proceed one page at a time, chronologically, if you wish. You will also see links to each category in which that post is placed.

We're finishing up a remodeling job on the website, so if something seems a bit odd or difficult to navigate, please **click here to email me** and let me know. Thanks.

MY HISTORY

Click here to go to a page that tells the interesting story of how I obtained my car and its early history.

RESOURCES

As I work on my Charger, I post updates on this site. Newest updates are at the top. **Click here** to check them out.

BEST

August 15, 2010

NOPE!

The previous time I updated my page last fall, I had hoped that I was done priming and was on my last go-around with block sanding. I wasn't there yet! Really things are going quite well, but the doors (especially the passenger side door) still had some issues to resolve. When using my longest Dura-Block (about 24") I found some unhappiness that had somehow escaped detection in my previous attempts. After many nights of re-working the doors, I am now confident that things can resume.

I have reprimed the reworked areas, and am eager to begin blocking them again. You really can't tell much difference from the pictures, so I'm not posting new ones yet. I do have some good news to report however, I have spoken to a guy I trust who owns a Mopar restoration shop nearby (about 45 minutes away) and he is willing (and more than able) to paint my Charger when I'm done sanding!

One of the reasons for the lack of progress lately has been how busy we've been as a family. Since spring we've been helping an elderly lady by cleaning up her property. Her late husband (who died about 20 years ago) was a mechanic, collector, and accumulator of lots and lots of stuff. Well she figured it was time to sell the place, so my family and I volunteered to help out. It was fun, and rewarding, but most of all, a lot of work! We sorted and hauled a bit over 90,000 lbs of scrap metal off her place to a scrap yard about 1 hour from there (each way). We hauled off several tons of trash (not included in the 90,000lb figure), over 125 tires (also not included in the 90,000lb figure), lots of cars, appliances, and assorted scrap metal. I did get a '67 Plymouth Belvedere which sadly had been mostly crushed but still had a few salvageable parts for my son's '67 Satellite, a '74 Dart Sport, and a '63 Dodge Dart GT both in decent shape. Some of these funds have given a boost to my "Charger paint job fund" and I hope and pray that before the close of 2010 my car will be very very RED! Please stay tuned.

Posted in **RESTORATION** | **body** | **primer and paint** | **sanding** | **link to this page** || **Comments (0)**

November 22, 2009

Third time's the charm...?

When you mention bodywork, especially block sanding, to most people, they imagine and/or describe something that goes on and on and on, seemingly with no end in sight. While I am still enjoying seeing my Charger get better and better with each stage of progress, I am looking forward to that final block-sanding in the sky when I can sand the entire car and see nothing but primer. Then I should know I'm done. Will I get that this time? I hope to know the answer to that in the next six weeks or so. This next round of blocking will be done with 600-grit paper, and things keep looking better and better. Stay tuned.

I owned my Charger for 17 years before I had the facilities and skills to enable me to do the full restoration I had always dreamed about. [Click here](#) to view pictures illustrating the various changes in my car during that time. The most recent information is at the top of the page.

M Y
M I N

I collect Mopar miniatures, mostly in 1/18th scale die-cast metal. [Click here](#) to look at my collection. The link will open in a new window.

M Y
M O P

My family's vehicle fleet consists of five Mopars besides my Charger. [Click here](#) to check them out. The link will open in a new window.

H E L P
[General Mopar Links](#)
[Charger Links](#)

S E N D

N A V I

The links below will take you to the corresponding sections of this restoration journal.

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November 17, 2009

Second block sanding all done

O The second block sanding was done with 320-grit paper on Durablock sanding blocks in varying sizes and shapes. It is gratifying that there were fewer things that needed attention than the last time, and some areas, like the hood, are "there".

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August 17, 2009

C A T
BEFORE RESTORATION
Family Helpers
RESTORATION
body
disassembly
engine
glass
interior
primer and paint
rust & rust repair
sandblasting
sanding
sheet-metal replacement
suspension, brakes, tires, and
wheels
trim
wiring

E Second round of 2K primer

The work continues. The application of the primer went well. I didn't repeat some of the mistakes I made last time, though I did make a couple of new mistakes. The good thing about the primer is that you end up sanding off your mistakes. It is very gratifying to see the panels coming out straighter and straighter. The next round of block sanding will begin shortly. While it was 150 grit last time, this time we'll be using 320 grit and we will be avoiding cutting down to bare metal. I'm not anticipating a problem with any severe high spots, but time and work will tell if I'm right.

Here's a slide show of a walkaround of the car with the second round of primer on it.

A R C
August 2010
November 2009
August 2009
July 2009
June 2009
March 2009
February 2009
December 2008
October 2008
June 2008
October 2007
August 2007
July 2007
June 2007
April 2007
March 2007
February 2007
January 2007
November 2006
October 2006
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May 2005
March 2005
September 2004
April 2004
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February 1995
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June 1991

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Just before the second round of 2K primer

Well, my son and I finally finished the first round of block sanding on my Charger. After blowing the car off really well with compressed air and using a tack cloth on the body, I covered bare metal areas with self-etching primer. Then, after letting it dry for a day or two, I blew the car off with air again, washed it down with wax and grease remover, and tacked it off again one final time, in preparation for the second application of 2K primer.

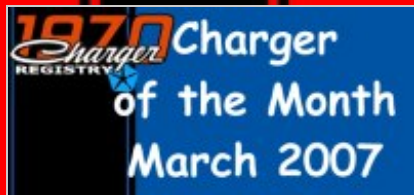
Here's a slideshow of a walkaround of the car just before I started spraying. The various highs and lows exposed during block sanding are now much more level than before and are about to be covered up again.

October 1989
August 1989
July 1989
November 1987
May 1987
April 1987
April 1986

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My Charger Was



at the 1970 Charger Registry.

S E A

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July 29, 2009

Dividing the work, multiplying the fun



We recently had the treat of having my niece and nephew over at our house for a couple of days. While they were here, my son and I took my nephew out to the garage and showed him how much fun it is to sand on my Charger. The boys both did a really good job, and it was fun to teach them some of the things I've learned the hard way - not to mention it was really great for me to see that side of the car being sanded much more rapidly than when I'm working alone. Thank you, kids!

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June 03, 2009

Block Sanding 101

This summer, with our Bible study on vacation until fall, I find myself with some extra time on some evenings. My son and I have embarked on a project to get the block sanding moving at a quicker pace: I am teaching him what I have learned, and he is being a HUGE help. We are having a lot of fun together. We're making rapid progress on completing our first go-round of the car, and I anticipate during August putting on the next layers of 2K primer, and blocking the car out again, but then with 320-grit paper (we are using 150-grit on our first pass).



Not only is it wonderful to spend time with my son and get things done, but an added bonus is seeing his growing enthusiasm for about the upcoming restoration of his 1967 Satellite. (You can see a picture of his car [here](#).) Working on my Charger together is excellent training for him, because when we're done with my car, his is next and he will be doing much of the work on that project.



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March 01, 2009

Block sanding.

With the car perfectly stable, and all my fears of it falling down gone, I happily got back to work. I am using a series of **Dura-Block** sanding blocks of various sizes and shapes. The blocking out itself goes fairly quickly. The green tape line that is visible down the car is of course protecting the body line. The tape allows me to sand to but not over the body line I worked so hard to perfect in the body work phase of my Charger's restoration.

From what I have read and what my buddy **Howard Holland** told me, on the initial block-sanding, I didn't have to worry too much about seeing small

patches of metal show, because I'm in the coarse leveling phase. When I'm done with this round of block sanding, and I've dealt with anything that is far too high or low, I will shoot more 2K primer and block it out again with finer paper, and be more concerned about not cutting as deep from that point on.

So far, the blocking out of the Charger has been a lot of fun, and I'm really enjoying seeing the car's body get straighter and smoother with each pass.



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February 17, 2009

Getting my rear-end in gear

The way my entire Charger was sitting on jack-stands made it easy for me to prime. However, I noticed when block-sanding the car that the whole Charger would start to sway. This made me very nervous. I kept having terrible visions of my now-pristine quarter panels and fenders slamming on the ground. I decided I needed to stabilize the car better.

Since I had everything ready to go on the rear end, I decided I would put it under the car and put some junky tires on the car. The photos below chronicle the sequence I went through in this part of the project. One of the neatest things was, this was the first time that I was able to start emptying some boxes that had held new parts.

These first two pictures show the rear end stripped of its original 10-inch brake parts, with the axles put back in place. With it hanging from my engine hoist, I had just completed sandblasting the entire rear end.



These two photos are of the assembled and painted rear end, with the 11-inch

heavy-duty brake hardware, the Mopar Performance OEM-style 440/Hemi leaf springs, all-new bushings, new hard brake lines, and the new rubber brake line. The gears in the 489-cased third member are 3:55's with the large 440 yoke. All that is ready to be rolled under the car.



In this photo, you can see everything in the new 11-inch rear brake system has been replaced: wheel cylinders, all the springs, self-adjuster parts, brake linings, everything new and shiny.



Here the rear end is all bolted in. The tires are tall, skinny 7.00-15 Bobcat tractor tires that I had from past projects. They allow plenty of room for me to work around the wheel wells, and I won't care if they get paint all over them. With the rear end in place and my stoutest jack-stands moved as far forward on the frame as I can get them, my Charger is now rock-solid, and I'll feel a lot better working those panels over as I block things out.



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December 25, 2008

A Very MoPar Christmas 2!

I've been eyeing this 426 Hemi Christmas ornament for years and finally bought it this year. It's now known as The Holy Hemi in our household.



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December 14, 2008

A Very MoPar Christmas!



Mopar Collector's Guide's January 2009 issue had instructions for creating a Mopar-themed wreath. My twelve-year-old son whipped one up for the shop door in about five minutes.

Posted in **Family Helpers** | [link to this page](#) | **Comments (0)**

2K Primer



Here I am admiring the beautiful lines of my Dodge Charger. I happen to have been wearing my Charger-logo polo shirt while my wife was taking photos of the 2K primer job on the car, and she asked me to pose. (*I am smiling.*) All those boxes on the shelves in the background are full of parts to go on/in my Charger once the final paint job is done.

Well, finally I was able to get my 2K primer on my Charger. I am a year and a

half or more behind where I thought I would be, but I spent that time learning better ways to straighten and perfect the body of the Charger. I am glad that I waited, as things are looking fairly good now, with three coats of the high-build primer on the car. I have begun the blocking-out process, and so far it is a lot of fun. Once the blocking-out is done, another several coats of primer will go on, and the car will be blocked out again. Hopefully by that point the body will be ready for paint. However, experience has shown me not to get in a rush, and to take time to do it right no matter how long (or how many tries) it takes.

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October 28, 2008

Removing the suspension

The following series of pictures shows my Charger starting out on jackstands with the tires and wheels removed, displaying, hopefully for the last time, its sad stock ten-inch drum brakes. I wanted to remove as many of these parts as possible prior to priming and painting.

Upgrading the brakes is not the only thing I have in mind for this phase of my project. When this goes back together, I will install Hemi .960 front torsion bars and stock XHD 440/Hemi leaf springs. I have all new polygraphite bushings to install throughout, a firm-feel steering box, 12-inch front rotors from a Chrysler Cordoba riding on disc-brake spindles from a '73 Valiant, and 11" HD drums out back. I will also upgrade to a 1 1/8" diameter front sway bar.



My son, just completing the removal of the steering column.



This picture, in addition to showing the absence of the suspension, shows fairly well what I have been doing these last months on my car. I have been working very hard to get my body lines straight and appropriately crisp. I think they show fairly well in this photo.



Rear view of the car; rear-end, springs and shackles all had to go as well.



Having the engine bay this clear should make it extremely easy to get the primer and paint everywhere I need them to be, prior to reinstalling the restored and upgraded front suspension and K-member.



It is really something I thought I would never see, looking at this pile of parts in the side of my garage. It will be a lot of fun this winter to disassemble, clean, restore, and upgrade all of these assemblies prior to installation, after the paint goes on.

Posted in **RESTORATION** | **body** | **disassembly** | **suspension, brakes, tires, and wheels** | [link to this page](#) | **Comments (1)**

One last sandblasting chore



As the day to put primer on my Charger draws near, I realized I had neglected to strip the old paint and minor surface rust, etc., off the inner part of my doors. I had used a wire wheel on my grinder to remove all the paint from the door jamb area of the car body itself, but wanted a good fresh start on the doors. My son and I removed the doors, gutted the latches and window regulators etc., and set them outside for sandblasting. The red tank-looking object between the doors in the first photo is my inexpensive but very serviceable sandblaster.



This is a closeup of the areas I sandblasted. I protected the outside edge of the door, which already has primer on it, with a heavy layer of masking tape prior to sandblasting. I was very pleased with the results. All the rust, all the paint, all the years of glue, etc., are gone. After this, the doors were taken inside the garage and etching primer was applied to all the bare metal.

June 20, 2008

Homecoming!

Nine months ago, my family and my Charger left the home we'd been renting for a long time. My inlaws graciously agreed to allow me to not only store but work on my Charger while we were staying with them, which we did while we waited for our new home to become available. In January, we were finally able to move into our house. We've been continuing renovations, unpacking boxes, etc.. Finally, a few weeks ago, nearly exactly a year from the day we first laid eyes on the house we would eventually buy, the garage was ready to receive my Charger. In the slideshow below you will see a series of photos starting with the Charger in the garage at my inlaws', progressing through to the point at which it finally is resting in my wonderful 26'x26' garage. A friend and I redid the electrical setup in the garage; now there are plenty of outlets for power tools, air compressors, etc., and 24 4' fluorescent bulbs in 12 fixtures. Work can continue around the clock!

In the near future, we will be adding more detail and hopefully some new progress pictures.



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